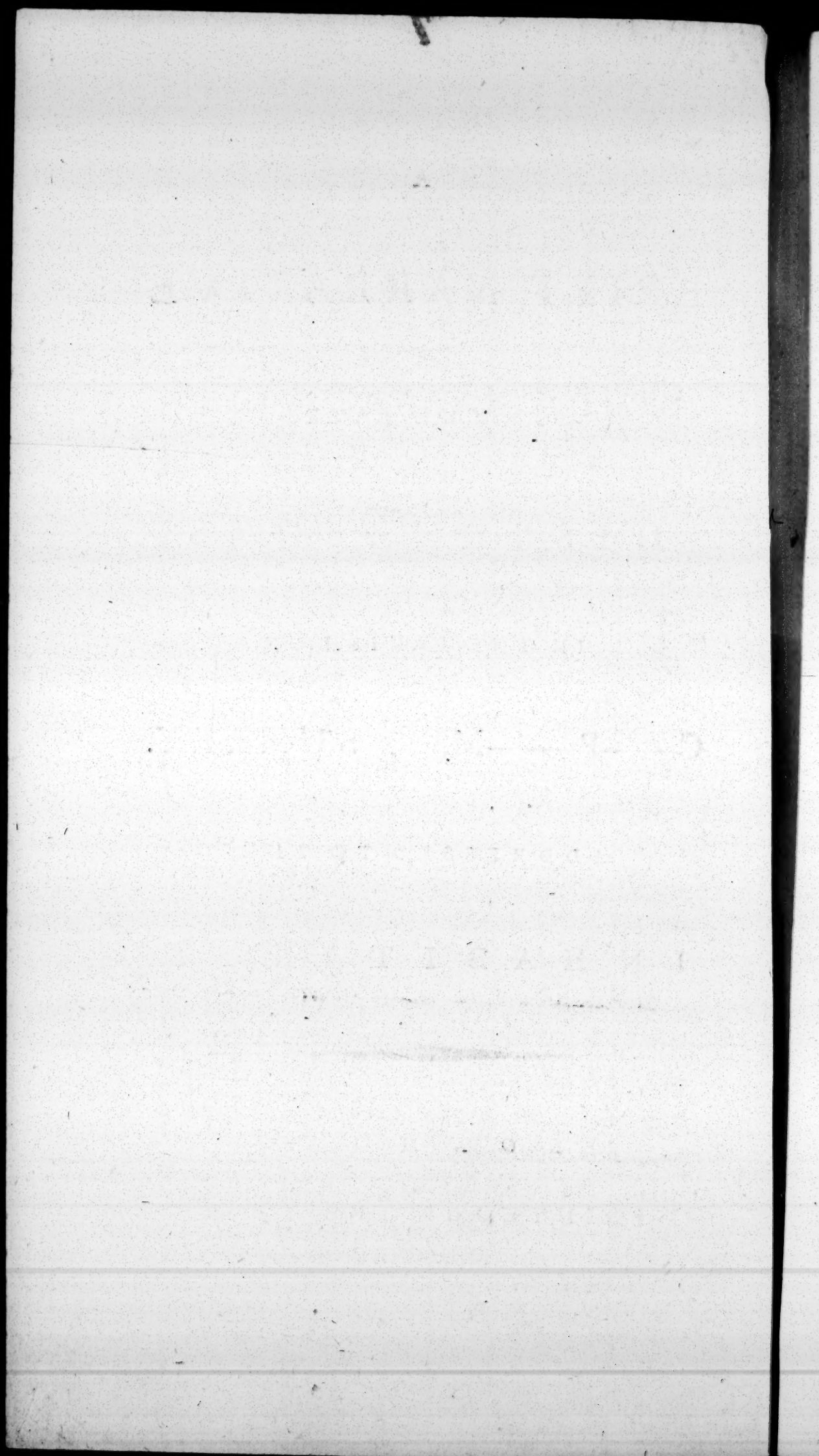


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A
BRIEF NARRATIVE
OF THE LATE
DISSENTIONS
IN THE PARISH OF
C—P—M, IN SURREY.
ADDRESSED TO THE
INHABITANTS.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED IN THE YEAR
MDCCXC.



A

BRIEF NARRATIVE, &c.

THE encroachments that have been made at different times on the common and waste-grounds of your parish by fundry individuals, having been much the topic of animadversion and complaint lately—it may not be impertinent to give a succinct account of the business to an impartial public, who will judge for themselves.

No matter how many depredators there were, some did notoriously exist, and those too, whose rank and honourable stations in life ought to have taught them more honourable conduct.

The last act of usurpation was that of R. T. Esq. who, without thinking it necessary to deviate from the accustomed mode that had been too long connived at *of taking without leave what best suited them*, did, in conjunction with his father, enclose about half an acre opposite their own houses on the common.

The event of this indecent act will probably be found fatal to the whole body of depredators: for this encroachment was scarcely fenced in, before a spirited gentleman among you (Mr. W—e) ventured to openly complain of encroachments in a public vestry.—What was the consequence of this bold advance? Mr. E. than whom you have not perhaps a better citizen, nevertheless, confiding in that open and as *he presumed* sufficiently legal permission by which he had taken a certain section in Dragnire-Lane, was led to retort on Mr. W—e in a manner wholly ungentlemanlike, and charged him with personality, although it was notorious that Mr. E. as an encroacher had scarcely been thought of.—

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The reconciliation that ensued might have been perfect, but for the obtrusive conduct of a gentleman of the faculty, who thinks it becomes him to defend his friends in every difficulty; but which led Mr. W—e to give notice that he should agitate the business in another vestry, and he retired in evident disgust.

Previous to any further discussion, Mr. W—e had an opportunity of founding the sentiments of the parish, when, exclusive of a majority of the respectable gentlemen of the place, the lower, and perhaps more deserving order of the people were palpably friends to his proposal of redress. But when the day of discussion did arrive, the prejudices of party, with oppressive power, proved insurmountable difficulties.

The meeting was called to inquire into the encroachments, enclosures, and nuisances committed on the common and waste lands of the parish, and it was the proper design of Mr. W—e to gain a committee to inquire into and report the same.—Than
which,

which, what could be more reasonable?—
 If encroachments did not exist, would not
 the shaft of calumny have been stunned?
 Have the honourable ought to dread that
 they should recoil at examination?

The proceedings of the prior vestry
 (and which contained a request to allow
 R. T. Esq. to enclose, or rather to retain
what he had taken, and which had been ob-
 truded on the tail of that vestry) being read,
 that presumptuous gentlemen (R. T. Esq.)
 stood up to offer the *amende honorable*:
 “ He apologized for being the unexpect-
 “ ed occasion of bringing forward an exa-
 “ mination (which ought long ago to have
 “ been made!) into the grasping acts of
 “ others; that he really did not observe
 “ what he had taken till it was finished,
 “ and having far more weighty and impor-
 “ tant matters to attend, *how should he see*
 “ *what was doing before his nose!!*—That he
 “ really was sorry, but hoped gentlemen
 “ would consider the expence he had been
 “ at in beautifying *their* property—and he
 “ assured them that he would never do the
 “ like

“ like again:”—This very humble suitor moved the hearts of his hearers, and did nearly disarm his enemies by humility. The consequence was, that the permission was carried by a majority of hands—among which, his own and his relatives appeared particularly conspicuous.

Mr. P—e next addressed this numerous and respectable meeting by exhorting them to unity—a fulsome panegyric on the extensive charities of several of the delinquents, and concluded a time-serving speech by commenting on the motives of the authors of this inquiry.

S. T. Esq. followed him, and in order to avert the storm that was pending, began to urge the utility and heavy expence of what he had done *for the public!* “ *that he had taken nothing without permission,*”—and *that he had given the parish as much ground in lieu.* As such, tacitly establishing his right *to hold, dispose of, or devise away,* the valuable common property of the parish!!

S. S.

S. S. Esq. then offered his doubts of the competency of lease-holders to agitate this unlucky business—but he withheld admitting that nearly 8-10ths of the whole parish are of that description, or yearly tenants who pay Scot and Lot.—His son also in an eloquent manner reiterated the same doubts, and inveighed *warmly* on the great nuisance of *dungbills*!—These gentlemen's authority would not have had their wonted weight, if it had then been generally known, *that one of them was an encroacher himself!*

Poor W—e was at length permitted to open the business, but such were his perturbations, and his modest deference to the great, that although he made bold and animated general comments on the impositions existing, yet his fear of offence would not allow him to recapitulate the encroachments in detail—but closed his patriotic exertions with presuming on similar propensities to justice and confident relief. He moved “that
 “ a committee of twelve gentlemen be appointed to examine into the encroachments
 “ &c. in the parish and report the same.”

The

The motion, which ought to have met unanimous approbation, was seconded by a very worthy gentleman, but whose indisposition would not permit him to lay down that legal disquisition which the encroachers had pretended was so necessary.

W. T. A. Esq. (one of that description also) rose for that reason, it is naturally to be presumed, and moved *the previous question!* In brief, the assertor of the invaluable rights of man, finding that a general consternation and indifference, had seized his numerous friends in the meeting, was absolutely constrained to withdraw his motion.

The subject of encroachments might have ended here, if unfortunately for the delinquents, certain notorious proof of *undue influence* at this famous vestry had not been discovered;—if the bugbear of right of common to lessees had not been speedily exploded;—if the number and extent of the depredations had not enfolded themselves;—and if the permission that S. T. Esq. had so arrogantly asserted he was possessed of,

could have been found, either on record or on memory.—This was not all, an order was issued, purporting to be the resolve of the last vestry, that two indigent and industrious people should remove their sheds on this common.—It was their vote; but like many others on the parish records, was the posthumous act of a *select junta*, who remained behind to deliberate *on their own advantages!*

After a delay of several weeks, another vestry was unavoidably called on general business. The confirmation of the disgraceful resolve just alluded to, and of a *sensible* measure that R. T. Esq. had given birth to, though an insult both on the justice and common sense of that vestry, gave Mr. W—n an opportunity of offering his sentiments on the subject so generally the topic of discussion: but as he was frequently interrupted, and as they have been erroneously reported, we shall give the public a sketch as near as we are able, of that gentleman's spirited declamation.

“ The

“ The introduction of that business did ho-
 “ nour to the heart of its introducer ; what-
 “ ever may have been his animated zeal—
 “ he did that day prove himself, in the ful-
 “ lest sense of the word, a friend to the inva-
 “ luable rights of mankind. But it is not
 “ the motive—it is not the man—it is the
 “ measure, that candour will only attend to.

“ The irresistible force of party—and of
 “ power—and the ties of consanguinity
 “ have choked the road to justice, and
 “ though you did quash the most equitable
 “ and most reasonable motion that ever was
 “ agitated in any vestry, yet, be assured, that
 “ this parish will never rest easy under this
 “ accumulated depredation on their pro-
 “ perty.

“ I will not now enter into the minute
 “ disquisitions of the law, but I will presume
 “ to say, that neither the pretended permis-
 “ sion of the Lord of the Manor, or that
 “ of a vestry, will legally disable you from a
 “ repossession.

“ The frantic zeal of the wilds of America hath been imputed to us :—in that land of dissatisfaction, where the reciprocal rights of man are better understood than *moral obligations*; if an individual there presumeth to invade his neighbour’s property—*Brother Jonathan, our unalienable patrimony is attacked—we are insulted in our dearest concerns*—before evening the fences would be levelled with the ground!

“ The dissolution of brotherly unity, and the sweet emanation of their boasted charities have been also thundered in your ears.—He that throweth the first stone destroyeth the bonds of unity—and pray, are we gentlemen pensioners? or, would any one of us stoop to their vaunted donation?—No, gentlemen, the old adage is verified—Charity, sweet charity! how art thou prostituted! *began at home!!*

“ I would, gentlemen, have introduced

* It would have appeared preposterous to assert, that an obligation was attached to this wonderful benevolence to give away a considerable annual sum!

“ you

“ you into the boundaries of power,—into
 “ the acres of aristocracy—and have given
 “ you their precise dimensions ;—but walls,
 “ fit for a Baron’s castle, a Bastile, or a Bench-
 “ Prison, rendered the premises impervious
 “ to human eye—and, when I could have
 “ obtruded myself—Steel-traps !—spring-
 “ guns !—stared me in the face—*presumptu-*
 “ *ous man that thou art !*—if thou venturest
 “ *on this hallowed ground—thy life shall be the*
 “ *sacrifice !*—Not contented, gentlemen, with
 “ having depredated on your property, they
 “ have placed on it the instruments of de-
 “ struction—nor give you even “ *one longing,*
 “ *lingering look behind !*”—Which ever way
 “ you turn yourself—these are the abutments
 “ of power—those the projections of aris-
 “ tocracy !—Allured by this charming spot,
 “ and by the opulence and pride of its in-
 “ habitants—they made their last stand here.
 “ Blessed be God—their hour of flight is at
 “ hand—and perdition seize their course !”

He then recapitulated some of the many
 encroachers on the public property, among
 which, we were sorry to observe

1. S. T.

1. S. T. half an acre in Acre-Lane, and the whole area before his house.

R. T. }
I. T. } in conjunction with

S. S.

Estate of B. corner of Dragmire-Lane.

2. W——dge in fame.

3. Mr. Justice B. adjacent to his house, and sold to C. Esq.

Mr. L. a shed &c. in centre of common.

C. E—e, a certain path and farm-yard in Dragmire-Lane.

4. Mrs.

1. " This rural access to the village cannot now with propriety be called *Acre-Lane*.

2. " The parishioners of St——m will even admit that this selection lapsed from you, was not theirs.—
" When this man was asked by what privilege he had taken the common property, his reply was *that he had settled it with Mr. Justice B.!* This gentleman is a sort of Viceroy among you, and I will venture to pronounce that an inquiry into that business would be worthy of your attention.

3. " This is about half an acre, *and lapsed into the parish of B——ea.*

4. " Poor

4. Mrs. D—s, a small erection before her door.

Mr. H—s, two houses &c. in Nags-Head-Lane.

5. Mr. M—y, a small shed.

6. W. T. A. a public road adjacent to the Cock.

Cum multis aliis.

4. “ Poor widow!—which she had placed there for
“ her comfort and convenience.—Would it not have
“ been more *manly* to have added somewhat to her small
“ erection?—Then might she have viewed on one hand—
“ the greater encroachments of Mr. H—s, in Nag’s-
“ Head-Lane; and on the other—those of Mr. T. on
“ the common, which would have afforded her ample
“ room for contemplation.

5. “ I should not have enumerated this honest man,
“ but for his reply on being urged to remove his shed.
“ I have moved it, agreeable to vote of vestry, and though
“ but six Inches—yet, when I see those great men, by
“ whose examples I ought to be governed, take away
“ their acres and half acres,—then will I take my little
“ shop away!” A speech worthy of a Roman Senator.

6. “ When they have sufficiently plucked the *body cor-*
“ *porate* they will attack the *body corporal*! Your Cock
“ and all its appendages will hardly be left you!!”

The

The only reply that was made was a retort, that Mr. W. himself possessed encroached ground.—But twenty-five years ago, a different spirit actuated the sons of old England. Mr. E—s could have proved (and you have not an honefter man,) that he received upwards of £22 for removing the boundaries alluded to, only four feet.

To conclude, whatever may be the event of an honest and patriotic contention for your invaluable rights—whether it endeth in demolition or no, we will venture to assert, *that truth and Justice are on one side, and that presumptive obtrusion on their neighbours property, with confusion and disgrace, must be eventually the portion of the other.* But it now rests with the public.

AN ENGLISHMAN.

Note. The world should also be told that though the collected encroachments enhance the value of the depredators estates upwards of £1500, yet they have had the address to avoid paying any additional parochial rates, which in your parish amount to 50 per cent. on your rentals!

F I N I S.

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